

## SENIORS WANT TO STAY IN THEIR OWN HOMES

An AARP survey determined that among those 75 and older, 95% say they want to stay in their homes as long as possible. AARP found that though seniors would prefer to stay in their own homes, their homes are often not designed to meet their needs. There are many ways to adapt a house to make it more accessible – from installing grab bars in the bathroom to building wheelchair ramps or installing a stair lift. The top two problem areas in most homes are stairs and bathrooms. For some people, installing rails and grab bars can do the trick. For others, putting in a bathroom on the first floor may be the solution. In either case, finances and needs must be assessed on an individual basis. Physical and occupational therapists can determine the adaptations which would aide someone to stay in their own home. Your physician can order a home safety evaluation through the VNA if you are homebound – either temporarily or permanently. In addition, Springwell has some resources for caregivers of elders or elders who are caregivers. A care advisor at Springwell can make a home visit to a caregiver and if appropriate, she can authorize a home safety evaluation by a qualified professional.

Once you have determined what adaptations need to be made, you need to figure out the cost and payment for these changes. There are a few organizations which can assist income eligible individuals financially either through grants or low interest loans. There are many agencies which can provide technical assistance as well.

If you don't need major renovations to your home, there are six (6) simple, low-cost changes which **every senior** should make:

- Put night lights in the bedroom, hall and bathroom (kitchen too if you are a nighttime nibbler)
- Get a large number telephone
- Use higher wattage light bulbs (trade in those 60 watts for 100)
- Get rid of all throw rugs
- Use non-skid bathtub strips
- Replace your faucet knobs with levers

If you would like more information, call Kathy at 617-796-1663 or Meghan Kennedy at 617-796-1672.